

THE REPORTER

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JCC holding "Save our Center" campaign

The Jewish Community Center is holding a "Save our Center" campaign due to challenges caused by the coronavirus. In order to follow the guidelines required by New York state, the JCC has temporarily shut down all its programming, except for the Early Childhood Center and Kids Connection daycare programs, which are taking children on a limited basis.

Anyone who would like to take part in the campaign can donate by visiting www.binghamtonjcc.org/donate, call the JCC at 724-2417 between 9 am-4 pm weekdays or send a check made out to the JCC to 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850. The JCC is also asking members who feel financially comfortable paying for their membership dues to continue to do so. Any dues paid during its closure will be considered a tax-deductible contribution to the JCC.

"As a nonprofit, we rely on program fees for the bulk of our revenue," said Sheryl Brumer, executive director of the JCC. "As a result, our revenue has declined significantly. Sadly, we have had to furlough over 85 percent of our staff to date (90 employees), keeping only a skeletal crew as we continue to provide daycare to families in need and work toward securing the future of our Center. They were very understanding and remain dedicated to the JCC and our



The Early Childhood Center remains open.

community. It was heartbreaking and heartwarming at the same time, and we are anxiously awaiting the time when we

will be welcoming them back."

The JCC had been working on a financial plan with the goal of ensuring its sustainability for the future and to continue to pay the remaining staff for as long as possible. Anyone who paid for services or classes that did not take place, or were interrupted due to the closure, will have those funds remain on their accounts as the programs are being rescheduled to resume at a later date.

"We are so grateful to everyone who has donated to date. We will continue to keep you updated as information becomes available," Brumer said.

"Thank you for your patience and understanding. If you find you are in need of any kind of assistance, please don't hesitate to e-mail us at jccoffice@binghamtonjcc.org and we will do our best to direct you toward people and resources who may be able to help," Brumer added.

"Jewish Bioethics During a Pandemic" on May 17

Temple Concord will hold a virtual adult education program called "Jewish Bioethics During a Pandemic with Dr. Carol and Rabbi Gary Gerson" on Sunday, May 17, at 10:30 am, on Zoom. To register for the program, send an e-mail Templeconcord-binghamton@gmail.com; a link will be sent prior to the program.

"We are reading daily about the shortage of personal protective equipment, ventilators and hospital beds," said organizers of the event. "When we run out of these vital supplies and equipment, what ethical criteria do we use to decide who gets treated and who does not? Who decides? Do we assign higher value to some lives, do we use an algorithm based on medical criteria alone, or a simple lottery? We will review some of the algorithms offered for guidance to medical staff faced with crisis decisions." Organizers added, "We will debate which

of these criteria we think are ethical, and review some of our Jewish sources which address ethically difficult decisions. What do our texts tell us about such decisions? There will be time for discussion."

Dr. Carol Gerson is a retired pediatric otolaryngologist and an active *mohelet* with a doctorate in bioethics. She is a faculty member of the medical schools of Northwestern and Tulane universities.

Rabbi Gary Gerson served as senior rabbi of Oak Park Temple B'nai Abraham Zion in the Chicago suburbs from 1979-2009. Now rabbi emeritus, he teaches courses in Jewish text, Kabbalah, Jewish thought and comparative religion. Gerson holds master's degrees in religion and psychology, along with rabbinic ordination, a doctorate in ministry with an emphasis in psychology and religion, and certification as a family therapist.

Federation alert: May update

Dear Friends,
The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton and Jewish Family Service want you to know we continue to extend our hand to everyone in the Binghamton Jewish community. Nobody knows how long we will need to isolate from one another or when we will return to any routine that is familiar.

If you or someone you know is struggling financially or emotionally during this unprecedented time, please reach out. We have resources and want to assist you. You are the reason for the work we do. Our mission is for everyone to come out of this crisis connected and whole.

Our local Jewish organizations are offering opportunities for learning and praying together. Although our community calendar has changed, you can find

out more about virtual offerings by going to our Community Guide and contacting organizations directly (www.jfjb.org/jewish-organizations-in-binghamton), or look in upcoming issues of *The Reporter*.

Every day, we practice the Jewish value that says "*kol Israel aravim zeh ba zeh*" (all Jews are responsible for one another). This is true now, as it has always been and always will be.

Wishing you good health, safety and lots of love.

Shelley Hubal, Jewish Federation Executive Director
Rose Shea, Jewish Family Service Director
Suzanne Holwitt, Jewish Federation President
Rita Bleier, Jewish Family Service Committee Chair
Office Phone: 724-2332

Spotlight

Jewish resources to occupy your family during social distancing – part 8

By Reporter staff

A variety of Jewish groups are offering online resources – educational and recreational – for those who are not allowed out of the house. Below is a sampling of those. The Reporter will publish additional listings as they become available.

◆ The Tuesday Jewish Issues webinar program has moved to Zoom. The program, taught by Rabbi Ari Enkin, looks at new ideas, laws, concepts or philosophies in Judaism. To receive e-mails about the program and links to Zoom, e-mail support@learningisrael.com.

◆ The National Museum of Jewish American History is looking for stories about nurses or healthcare workers for its digital

collections archive. People are asked to post a short (60-90 second) video and tag it with #NMAJH answering, "What would you like people 50 years from now to know about your life and work experience during the COVID-19 pandemic?" Videos can be uploaded to <https://vimeo.com/412117522>.

◆ May is Jewish American Heritage Month. Online resources and links to information about Jewish artifacts can be found at www.nmajh.org/jewish-american-heritage-month/.

◆ The Jewish Telegraphic Agency is collecting "Visions for the post-pandemic Jewish world: Imagining a better future" at [www.jta.org/2020/05/04/opinion/visions-for-the-post-pandemic-jewish-world-imag-](http://www.jta.org/2020/05/04/opinion/visions-for-the-post-pandemic-jewish-world-imagining-a-better-future)

ining-a-better-future. There are essays on art and culture, ritual and observance and community life. People continuing the conversation on social media are asked to use #JewishFuture when sharing ideas. Anyone interested in submitting an article should e-mail opinion@jta.org with "Visions Project Submission" in the subject line.

◆ Jewish Women International is holding virtual events, including information about finances during COVID-19. For more information, visit www.jwi.org/ and scroll down to the listing of events.

◆ Those who want to listen to Jewish rock music, or learn more about programming, can visit <http://www.jewishrockradio.com/>.

◆ For those who would like to hear a Jewish

story, visit <https://storieswetell.libsyn.com/>. The site is sponsored by Reform Judaism.org.

◆ My Jewish Learning has six Yiddish films that can be streamed at no cost. To learn more, visit www.myjewishlearning.com/article/six-yiddish-films-you-can-stream-right-now-for-free/.

◆ Celebrating @ Sinai, a virtual Shavuot celebration for the Reconstructionist movement, will begin with a Kabbalat Chag Song Fest and Candlelighting, on Thursday, May 28, at 7:30 pm, and continue with a Tikkun Leil Shavuot of teaching, learning, movement and musical offerings through Friday, May 29, at 10:30 am. Those interested in watching can view the proceeding on See "Social" on page 6

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Opinion

From the Desk of the Federation Executive Director

With gratitude

SHELLEY HUBAL

A friend of the family recently passed from coronavirus. His devoted wife was unable to continue her daily visits to the nursing home where he had resided for several years. Desperate to be with him during his last days, her family placed a four-foot ladder outside his window. She put on a mask and carefully climbed the ladder. The nursing staff cracked open the window and she spoke to him during his final hours. This story touched my heart. It speaks to the capacity of human love.

The Binghamton Jewish community has also shown tremendous love. Our Chesed Matching Grant Challenge was met with much success. We exceeded our goal of raising the \$10,000 we needed to match. Chesed means lovingkindness and that is what we experienced during

the campaign. I want to extend my warmest thank you to all of you for your support and contributions. The money will help us support our local organizations that will need help getting back on their feet once the pandemic is over.

I miss my extended family. We were supposed to have an unveiling for my father in April. With my mother and sister in Arizona unable to travel, we don't know when we will be able to properly honor dad at his grave side. Knowing my father, he would probably try to make us laugh: "What, you are in a rush? I am not going anywhere."

So, life goes on. We here at the Hubal house are doing our best to stay isolated, leaving the house only as necessary. We had a video chat with my mother-in-law

for Mother's Day, when normally we would have gotten together for brunch. It seems odd that they are here in town, but we have scarcely seen them in the last six weeks. We isolate because we love them. We want them to be safe and we look forward to the day when we will be together again.

The Federation office remains closed. We are moving forward with planning and fund-raising. Zoom meetings are far from ideal, but I am choosing to be grateful that we are able to conduct business. Please know that we are thinking of you all and holding you in our hearts during this most difficult time. Stay safe, reach out if you need help and remember that each of you are an important part of the rich tapestry that makes our community whole.

Toward a coronavirus vaccine: Jewish ethical questions

By Rabbi Jason Weiner

This article was first published in the Jewish Journal.

(JNS) – The coronavirus pandemic has given rise to some of the most complex and significant medical-ethics dilemmas in recent history, namely the question of triaging ICU care and, by extension, deciding who shall live and who shall die. As society begins to contemplate how to readjust to the new normal and eventually lifts isolation measures, new and similarly challenging ethical questions will arise.

One such question that has not yet received much discussion, but which I believe requires our community's attention, revolves around the rush to develop a vaccine. While it could take well over a year before a vaccine is available, the associated ethical issues will likely arrive much sooner.

One reason developing a vaccine takes so long is that researchers have to randomize test subjects into two groups. Group A gets the vaccine; group B gets a placebo. Researchers wait to see if more people from group B get sick than those in group A. If that happens, it is a sign that the vaccine is effective. However, it can take months

before researchers get their answer because, in its simplest form, this kind of study depends on waiting for people to be naturally exposed to the virus – which takes even longer with social distancing measures in place.

To speed up things, an alternative is something called a "challenge study." In a challenge study, just like the traditional study above, some people are given an experimental vaccine and some are not – but unlike with the traditional approach, everyone in a challenge study is deliberately exposed to the contagion. Researchers then compare the two groups: the vaccine versus the control. Running a study in this manner could save months, and thousands if not millions of lives. However, deliberately exposing people to the coronavirus involves risk: some may get very sick, and some may die.

How do Jewish law and values guide us in this? When it comes to taking risks in general, Judaism obligates us to attempt to help those in need, such as for instance jumping into a river to save a drowning person. But the degree of risk one is required (or permitted) to take to save life is a matter of debate.

The general consensus is that although one is not obli-

gated to put his or her life at risk to save another person, it is praiseworthy to do so – unless there is a significant risk, in which case doing so may be forbidden. The rabbis encourage us to make a cost-benefit analysis of the level of risk versus the potential good. For example, kidney donation, which carries some risk, is encouraged but not required, whereas bone-marrow donation, which carries negligible risk, may be viewed as obligatory when performed to save a life.

For that reason, I believe once plasma donations from those who have recovered from the coronavirus are shown to be safe and effective in treating current coronavirus patients, it can be seen as an expectation of Jewish law that those who have recovered must make such blood donations if they are able to.

In Jewish law, *hatzalat harabim*, or "saving the many," is given more weight than saving the individual when it comes to risk. For example, in the Purim story recounted in the book of Esther, Queen Esther was permitted to risk her life by approaching Ahasuerus since it was to save the entire community.

See "Ethical" on page 6

In My Own Words

Lockdown

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Let me see if I have this correctly: being asked to stay in your homes in order to stop the spread of COVID-19 is the exact same thing as "men and women stripped completely naked, lined up and facing a mass grave, where they are shooting them in the back of the head and falling in the grave." That's a recent quote from anti-government extremist Ammon Bundy. Now, I normally just shake my head at Holocaust comparisons because they are often made by over-emotional people who aren't thinking clearly. Once they have a chance to calm down, they usually realize that the comparison is not apt. Unfortunately, I don't think that is going to happen here.

It's the attempted equivalency that gets under my skin this time. Trying to keep people from dying is equated to murdering people. Get that? Keeping people safe is the same thing as murder. Now, if federal troops had been sent with machine guns and asked to deliberately shoot and kill Bundy and all his fellow protestors, then he might have something to complain about. But following laws made for the good of society? They are complaining about that? In my book, that makes these folks anarchists! Of course, during the 20th century, the U.S. government was not fond of anarchists. I guess the rules are different, though, when they're members of white right-wing groups, rather than left-wings ones. After all, Bundy has gotten away with this behavior before: in 2016 during an armed takeover at the

Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon, and after an armed standoff with law enforcement in Nevada in 2014.

The basic idea of government – or actually, being part of any group – is that we give up some of our personal freedom for the general good. Why would someone do this? Part of it is protection. The medium-sized guy is willing to not harm the smaller guy because he knows that the government will protect him from an even bigger guy who wants to harm him. Yes, I realize that is an oversimplification – and one that doesn't work for everyone – but that's the general idea. I obey the rules of the road because, if there were no rules, there is a good chance many more people would die from car accidents. I let the government have some of my wages so that it can keep the roads in good condition, collect the garbage (at least in the town of Union) and send firemen to stop my house from burning.

Can I opt out of this? According to Jewish law, the answer is a firm "no!" In a *midrash* in Vayikra Rabbah, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai tells a story about a group of people on a boat. One man took out a drill and began to drill under his seat. The rest of the passengers yelled at him to stop. The man asked, "What's the big deal? I'm only drilling under my seat, not your's." The passengers let him know that, while that may be his seat, what he does affects everyone. They all would drown. The moral? You can't do something that will possibly harm others. Could

the man have had a good reason for wanting to drill under his seat? Well, unless it was to save his life and the life of the other passengers, his reason was irrelevant.

I would like life to return to normal. I would like to see my mother, who is in a nursing home. I would like my brother and sister-in-law to come visit and see my mom. I would like to visit my friends this summer for vacation. I would like to get together with friends in person and eat out and talk about books and catch up on our lives. This list could go on for pages, but there is one question I need to ask before I decide to stop social distancing. Am I willing to let someone die so that I can do any of the above? In fact, am I willing to risk dying myself in order to do those things? My answer is no. I'm willing to work from home and do Zoom and eat not-as-great food and shelter in place in order to preserve lives.

The anti-lockdown movement is *not* pro-life. It's a group of people who are threatening our lives and liberty. I wish I could say, "Let them go out and do whatever they want because if they're willing to die, why should I stop them?" But the risk is too great because COVID-19 spread so quickly and easily. We are all in the same boat and these people are dangerous. They are using their weapons (real guns, in addition to protests) to threaten the rule of law. The government should not let them endanger the rest of us.



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The Reporter welcomes letters on subjects of interest to the Jewish community. All letters must be signed and include a phone number; names may be withheld upon request.

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PBS to show film on antisemitism on May 26

The film "Viral: Antisemitism in Four Mutation" will premiere on PBS on Tuesday, May 26, at 9 pm. (Check local listings for exact information.) Commissioned and funded in part by PBS, the film was directed by Emmy Award winner Andrew Goldberg. "Viral" covers contemporary antisemitism by looking at the far-right in the U.S., the far-left in the U.K., Islamic radicalism in France and the government antisemitic propaganda campaign in Hungary. The filmmakers were one of the only productions allowed to film in the Tree of Life synagogue after the shootings. The multi-million-dollar effort took three years to make and features interviews with Bill Clinton, Tony Blair, Fareed Zakaria, George Will and Deborah Lipstadt, as well as victims of terror, experts and antisemites themselves. It is narrated in part by Julianna Margulies.

"By virtually every yardstick, antisemitism in the U.S. and Europe is rising and worsening in ways not



Russell Walker, Republican for North Carolina, State House District 48, with a sign "God is a Racist."

seen since the 1930s," said those connected to the film. "It comes in the forms of vandalism, social media abuse,

assault and murder. Like a virus, it mutates and evolves across cultures, borders and ideologies, making it all but impossible to stop."

They continued, "The film examines how some on the American far right have incited such acts as the mass shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA. In Hungary, we see how the prime minister has launched a massive campaign against Jewish Holocaust survivor and billionaire George Soros that's reminiscent of Nazi propaganda. Moving to the far left in England, we see members of the traditionally anti-racist Labour party conflating Israel and Jews, causing tremendous pain for the Jewish community. And in France, the film illuminates the seemingly endless wave of violence against Jews by Islamists and radicals."

For more information about the film, visit www.viralthefilm.com.

TC-URJ to hold Shavuot virtual events

Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell will hold an *erev* Shavuot ritual on Thursday, May 28, beginning at 6:30 pm, on Zoom, with the lighting of *Yizkor* and festival candles, the festival *Kiddush* and *Motzei*. People are then invited to continue their Shavuot evening with explorations and learning with the Union for Reform Judaism by registering for different programs, which begin hourly at 8 pm and stop at midnight. To receive a link to the Temple Concord Shavuot program, e-mail Templeconcordbinghamton@gmail.com to receive a link. To register for other sessions (see below), visit <https://urj.org/calendar/reform-movement-tikkun-leil-shavuot>.

◆ HUC-JIR professors will hold a Shavuot conversation from 8-9 pm on individual responsibility and obligation in modern Jewish thought, featuring Rabbi Rachel Adler, Ph.D. (Rabbi David Ellenson Professor of Jewish Religious Thought and professor of modern Jewish thought) and Rabbi Joseph Skloot, Ph.D. (Rabbi Aaron D. Panken Assistant Professor of Modern Jewish Intellectual History).
◆ "Preparing to Ascend: Poetry on the Themes of Shavuot" from 9-10 pm will feature Rabbi Hara Person, CCAR chief executive, and poets Jessica Greenbaum and Judy Katz reading and discussing poems that share themes with Shavuot.

◆ "Ahavat Olam: Love, Torah and Great Music" from 10-11 pm will feature Cantor David Berger of KAM Isaiah Israel Congregation in Chicago, IL (scholar-in-residence for the American Conference of Cantors) looking at classical rabbinic sources, contemporary reflections and sample pieces of music that bring the song "Ahavat Olam" to life.
◆ "A Discussion on Personal Jewish Stories" from 11 pm-midnight will feature Rabbi Leora Kaye (URJ director of program) and Rabbi Esther Lederman (URJ director of congregational innovation) in a conversation on personal Jewish stories. Other members of the Reform Movement will also have the opportunity to speak about their Jewish journeys.

JFS held conference on COVID-19

Jewish Family Service held a video conference on "How to Manage Isolation, Anxiety and Stress Around COVID-19" on May 1. The interactive video conference was led by Rita Bleier, chairwoman of the Jewish Family Service Committee, and Rose Shea, the director of JFS. Both are licensed clinical social workers.

During the video conference, it was noted that COVID-19 has brought many changes to people's lives. "Keeping track of one's mental health and coping is especially important," said Shea. "Feeling stressed and anxious and having frequent mood changes are common reactions."

The two leaders offered suggestions on ways to manage stress, anxiety and social distancing:

◆ Media exposure: With the abundance of information about COVID-19, it's important to choose reliable medical resources and to limit our exposure.

◆ Stick to a routine: Routines give us a sense of purpose: establish a wake-up time, get dressed and prepare for your day the same way as if you weren't social distancing. Keep active, eat well and get rest.

◆ Focus on the positives: Creating a positive mindset helps us to focus on things within our control. Take a moment to reflect on something you or someone did today that helped, or made someone smile.

◆ Stay socially connected: The way we interact with others has temporarily changed, but keeping in touch with those we care about is still possible. We can connect through telephone, e-mail and video chats.

Shea noted that COVID-19 can trigger emotions from other life events and/or losses. "It can be difficult at times, for various reasons, to share our emotions with our loved ones," she said. "The way each of us responds may be different

from our loved ones, friends, neighbors and colleagues. Yet each reaction is valid. It's OK to reach out for help."

Online resources are available to aide those having difficulty coping, including New York State Emotional Support, which can be reached at 1-844-866-9314. Headspace.com/NY offers free meditation, sleep and movement exercises. Additional resources may be available through a person's primary physician, and individual and group psychology and social work practices.

Although working from home, JFS remains open to provide resource referral, emotional support and telephone wellness calls three days a week.

TC Sisterhood to hold virtual installation

The Temple Concord Sisterhood Installation will be held on Wednesday, June 3, at 7 pm, during the Sisterhood board meeting, which will take place on Zoom. Everyone on the 2020-21 board is encouraged to participate, organizers said. Anyone outside this board who wants to participate should notify Lani Dunthorn at 348-4099 or lani.dunthorn@yahoo.com. The Installation service is being created by Barbara Thomas and Helene Philips.

Board members to be installed include Lani Dunthorn, president; Helene Philips, past president; Sandy Gutman, treasurer; Janet Hayman, financial and corresponding secretaries; Marty Eisenstadt, recording secretary; Deb Williams, nominating committee chairwoman; Phyllis Kellenberger, ways and means vice president; and Deb Daniels, education vice president.

Marsha Luks, Babs Putzel-Bischoff and Barbara Thomas are directors for 2020-22; and Roz Antoun and Williams, directors for 2020-21.

Committee chairwomen include Kellenberger and Daniels, adult education/programming including donor; Thomas, cradle roll; Barbara Dickman (paperwork), Sylvia Diamond and Eisenstadt, Friday night *onegs*; Williams (chairwoman of artisan vendors) with Jesse Parker (chairwoman of bake sale), Holiday Artisan Marketplace; Nancy Dorfman, house; Intersisterhood, TBD; High Holiday child care, TBD; Eisenstadt and Sandy Foreman (co-chairwomen) with committee members Jan Dickler, Arlene Krassin, Jodi Sampey and Olwen Searles, hospitality.

Carol Herz and Susan High (co-chairwomen) of the Judaica Shop; Putzel-Bischoff, publicity with others for electronic communications; TBD, entire Sisterhood Board with Dunthorn contact with temple, membership/retention; Putzel-Bischoff, Dorfman, Dunthorn, Kellenberger and Searles, nominating committee; TBD, religious school parties; Putzel-Bischoff (chairwoman) with Dickman, Gayle Klein and Luks, Rosh Hashanah *kiddush*; Pam Burgman and Hayman, rummage sales; Jean Hecht, scholar-in-residence *oneg*; Hecht, Sisterhood funds;

Rachel Coker and Cathy Eckert, Sisterhood Shabbat; TBD, Sisterhood Retreat; TBD, Women's Seder; and TBD, Whale of a Sale team.

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Thank you

to all who donated

The Jewish Community Center would like to thank everyone for their support during these difficult times. We are forever grateful for your generosity.

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"I did not find the world desolate when I entered it. And as my parents planted for me before I was born, so do I plant for those who will come after me."
-Talmud

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Off the Shelf

Novels that take place in Israel – part two

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Part one of this review focused on the more domestic aspects of Israeli life. This review speaks to the complex issues surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While politics are involved, all three authors focus on the personal side of these issues, which allows readers to see how they affect individuals living in Israel and the territories. Two of the novels are short and to the point (less than 150 pages), while the third offers a more panoramic view in its 450-plus pages.

“Evacuation”

Some short novels pack a deceptively powerful punch. That’s true of Raphael Jerusalmy’s “Evacuation” (Text Publishing). The entire novel is a dialogue between Naor and his mother that occurs when he drives her to Tel Aviv. During the trip, Naor, who is a filmmaker, offers a light-hearted tale about how he, his girlfriend Yael and Saba, his grandfather, remained in Tel Aviv during a recent evacuation of the city. Although everyone was supposed to leave, Saba refused, so Yael and Naor decided to keep him company. Even though bombs fall periodically, the three have a grand time roaming the city and making a film.

The early parts of the novel are light and amusing, but, after about 60 pages, it becomes clear that the adventure will take a darker turn, something that is slowly and casually revealed. To say more would spoil the plot, but, fortunately, it’s not the plot that makes “Evacuation” so successful.

Although the novel is fast paced and the prose is easy to read, the characters become so real that the ending left me feeling far more moved than expected. Even readers who guess what occurred will still find themselves reading due to the power of Jerusalmy’s simple prose. This book was so impressive that I’ve ordered a copy of the author’s first work.

“Apeirogon”

The dictionary defines an apeirogon as “a polygon having an infinite number of sides and vertices.” That definition fits Colum McCann’s ambitious and complex novel “Apeirogon” (Random House), which looks at the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from a not-quite infinite number of sides. Based on two real-life people – Israeli Rami Elhanan and Palestinian Bassam Aramin, both of whom lost daughters to the violence – McCann shows how the two men came together to use their voices for peace.

“Apeirogon” is a very literary work: it not only includes the tales of the two men, but offers a view of the birds that fly over Israel and the Palestinian territories. Numerous other characters are featured in short bursts, from a former president of France to the 19th-century adventurer Sir Richard Francis Burton. However, the main focus is on Elhanan and Aramin, whose life stories are repeated and retold as their understanding of events changes over the years. Aramin, who spent seven years in an Israeli jail and just wanted to live his life in peace, lost his daughter

to a rubber bullet fired by an Israeli soldier. Elhanan, who did his army service and was basically apolitical, lost his daughter to a suicide bomber. Both girls were innocent bystanders. Both killers were doing what they considered their duty. Both fathers are determined to stop the killings.

“Apeirogon” is not always easy to read, partly due to the reality of the situation, but also due to the nature of the prose. The disconnection between sections can be distracting and startling, although, after some thought, the author’s point usually becomes apparent. McCann doesn’t seem to take sides, but rather to question all sides. This is an excellent, if difficult, book, perfect for those who want to understand the human cost of the conflict.

“The Drive”

One of the basic blocks of Israeli life is military service. Refusing to serve or being released for a mental illness are stigmas that make it far more difficult to find a job, or even someone to marry. What this means to one young soldier is explored in the short novel “The Drive” by Yair Assulin (New Vessel), which has been inaccurately compared to Joseph Heller’s novel “Catch 22.” Assulin’s work is far more serious than Heller’s in its real exploration of what it means to be unable to perform under military discipline. While it also serves as a critique of army culture, the narrative lacks the humor of Heller’s novel.

The novel’s title refers to the drive taken by the unnamed narrator and his father to the army’s Mental Health Services. The soldier claims that he wants to continue his army service, but can’t do so at his current base. His parents urge him to not make waves – telling him that no one enjoys the army, but everyone manages to get through it. However, it becomes clear there is something more occurring: during his current visit home, the narrator has a type of fit, banging his head against a wall and then collapsing and sobbing like a baby. What no one wants to admit is that something is seriously wrong – and that includes the narrator himself.

“The Drive” features a rather unpleasant narrator, one who tends to blame other people for his problems. Readers are then forced to decide whether or not he deserves their sympathy, although it’s clear he is unable to cope with the stresses of army life. Assulin offers a very different picture of the Israeli army than one sees in most novels. Those willing to challenge their perceptions of Israel should find much to ponder.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Western Wall reopens to worshippers with strict social-distancing limitations

The Western Wall Plaza in Jerusalem re-opened to worshippers on the morning of May 5 after the Israeli government announced a softening of its social-distancing orders across the country. Prayer at the Western Wall since the start of the coronavirus pandemic was limited to those living in the Old City of Jerusalem, and to groups of only 10, and then 19, people at any one given time. The Western Wall Heritage Foundation, which manages the site, confirmed that worshippers can return to visiting the sacred site and pray in front of it “while keeping to the Health Ministry restrictions. The Western Wall prayer plazas will be divided into as many prayer areas as possible in the given area and in accordance with the regulations,” the Foundation explained on its website. “For the next few days, up to 300 worshippers will be allowed to come to the Western Wall plaza simultaneously, contingent on them wearing masks. Should the prayer areas all get full, worshippers will be requested to wait outside the entrances to the Western Wall, with the required distances between them, until space becomes available.” Celebrations at the Western Wall, such as



Preparations were made for the easing of coronavirus restrictions at the Western Wall in Jerusalem’s Old City on May 5. (Photo by Olivier Fitoussi/Flash90)

bar and bat mitzvahs, can be held “in accordance with regulations.” The Western Wall Tunnels, however, remain closed until further notice.

Community Calendar

The Community Calendar can be found on the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton’s website, www.jfgeb.org, by clicking on “calendar.” Updates or additions of events for the calendar can be made by contacting the Federation through its website (click on “calendar” and then “click here to request a change to the calendar”) or by calling 724-2332.

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY: The name of the limited liability company is: Beston Home Inspection Services, LLC (the “Company”). The date of filing of the Articles of Organization of the Company with the Secretary of State was April 8, 2020. The county in which the principal place of business of the Company shall be located is Broome County. The Secretary of State has been designated as agent of the Company upon whom process against it may be served. The Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the Company, to Hinman Howard & Kattell, LLP, Attn: Robert W. Carey, 80 Exchange Street, Suite 700, Binghamton, NY 13901. The purpose of the business of the Company is any lawful business purpose.

607 Construction LLC NOTICE OF FORMATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY (“LLC”)

Articles of Organization of 607 Construction LLC filed with the NYS Secretary of State (NYS) on 4/8/2020. Office of LLC is in Broome County. The Secretary of State designated as agent for service of process against it. NYSS shall mail process to 434 Cloverdale Road, Chenango Forks, NY 13746. Business purpose: any lawful activity.

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on 4/17/2020. Office of LLC is in Broome County. The Secretary of State designated as agent for service of process against it. NYSS shall mail process to 1963 Bradley Creek Rd, Endicott, NY 13760. Business purpose: any lawful activity.

Notice of Formation of Mushock Development LLC

Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 07/17/2006. Office location: Broome County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: The LLC, 1137 Simon Road, Endicott, New York 13760. Purpose: any lawful activities.

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- The SEPP, Inc. Office – 53 Front Street, Binghamton, NY 13905 – contact John Bernardo (607) 723-8989

Plans will be available for online viewing at the following locations:

- The Builders Exchange of the Southern Tier – www.bxstier.com – contact Cheryl Plahanski cheryl@bxstier.com (607) 771-7000
- Syracuse Builders Exchange – www.syrbox.com – contact Monica Noble (315) 437-9936

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As Israel's Supreme Court weighs in on unity gov't, how much power should it have?

By Israel Kasnett

(JNS) – In a landmark ruling, Israel's Supreme Court rejected all petitions against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu forming a new government while under indictment, and against the emergency unity government deal signed by Netanyahu and Blue and White leader Benny Gantz. However, the court did leave open the possibility of intervening in future legislation concerning the unity deal that is currently being debated in the Knesset.

ANALYSIS

With much of Israel's media focused on the recent court hearings, the current situation has brought to the forefront ongoing debates about the role the court should play in Israeli democracy.

Despite the ruling in favor of the government, Gadi Taub, a senior lecturer at the School of Public Policy and the Department of Communications at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, told JNS that the very fact the court accepted the appeal for discussion is "outrageous," "mind-boggling" and an "amazing feat of audacity."

"In agreeing to adjudicate this issue in the first place, the court is behaving as if it feels it needs to protect democracy from citizens," he said.

"There is no judiciary in any proper democracy as powerful as Israel's Supreme Court," said Taub. "In its own opinion, there is no limit to its power; there is nothing it does not believe is judicable, and it has the last word on everything."

While it's true that Israel is faced with an unprecedented rotation deal that includes significant changes

to Israel's Basic Laws to accommodate the terms of the unity deal signed by Netanyahu and Gantz, the central question is whether it is up to Israel's judicial or legislative branches to represent the will of the people. Israel's left sees the Supreme Court as a bulwark against the right and a defender of democracy. The right sees this as another example of tyranny of the courts and its effort to wrest away democracy from the people.

Taub pointed to a recent court ruling that overturned a legislative decision to ban illegal immigration as an example of the Supreme Court's overreach. "The court believes everything is judicable," he said. "[Former Chief Justice] Aharon Barak thought everything was under his authority, and he would have made [former U.S. Chief Justice] John Marshall [widely considered the most important and influential Supreme Court justice in U.S. history and credited with establishing the U.S. Supreme Court's role in federal government] look like a blushing virgin."

On May 5, the Likud and Blue and White parties both



Israelis watched a Supreme Court session on petitions filed against the proposed government, outside the Knesset on April 3. (Photo by Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)

made a few concessions in the coalition agreement between them and agreed to include policy guidelines; to allow for more bills to be passed; and to allow for senior appointments to be made. Mandelblit told the Supreme Court later that day that in his opinion, there is no reason for it to intervene or disqualify the revised coalition unity deal. See "Court" on page 7

Business Profiles

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Getting banks to show you the money

(NAPSI) – Although it's not easy for entrepreneurs to get loans these days, they remain a driving force in the U.S. economy. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, there are approximately 24 million small businesses in this country and they create 65 percent of new jobs.

Fortunately, financing is still available, even during these challenging economic times. Here are a few tips from www.bankofthewest.com/small-business.html for small business owners seeking loans to expand their companies.

1. Manage your credit. For most companies with revenue

under \$50 million, the owner's personal credit score is the company's credit score. That score is weighed heavily when banks evaluate loan applications, so manage your personal credit wisely.

2. Update your business plan. A detailed business plan that explains how you expect your business to grow, including realistic projections for revenues, expenses and cash flow, is critical. You must also be ready to explain how the loan would be used to expand your business.

See "Banks" on page 6

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Israeli humanitarian group joins efforts to combat coronavirus-related hunger in California

By Faygie Holt

(JNS) – IsraAID is expanding its reach from international disaster relief to helping in the United States as the COVID-19 outbreak has seen requests at food banks skyrocket.

“What happened now is an unprecedented disaster in the United States,” said Seth Davis, executive director of the nongovernmental group IsraAID U.S. “We felt it was important to activate our local members. There was a huge gap because food pantries were seeing a decrease in volunteers, and yet there was huge increase in need for food.”

Working with several other partners, including the Merage Institute and Shalom Corps, IsraAID reached out to local community members and asked for volunteers to help pack and distribute boxes of food on behalf of the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank. The boxes are distributed at Los Angeles public schools with parents coming to pick up prepared school lunches for their children. Each box contains enough food to feed a family of four for one week.

Some IsraAID volunteers help in the warehouse sorting food while others are on the front lines of the distribution – putting boxes directly into the cars of families when they arrive to get the food.

According to Davis, in just the first week, “we facil-



A volunteer with IsraAID humanitarian group worked at a Los Angeles food bank as a result of hungry families in need rocked by the coronavirus pandemic. (Photo courtesy of IsraAID)

itated 30 volunteers and assisted with the distribution of 21,000 boxes, which feeds approximately 58,000 people. It’s expanding very fast.”

Because many children rely on the Los Angeles Unified School District for both breakfast and lunch, IsraAID asked the Modern Orthodox Pico-Robertson section for assistance.

Flora Glouberman, chair of the Chesed Committee at Young Israel of Century City, has been organizing support initiatives for area residents. When she previously asked for volunteers to shop for the elderly or immune-compromised, she had more helpers sign up than people who needed help.

When she heard about the new food-distribution efforts from her rabbi, Rabbi Elazar Mushkin, she immediately shared it. “I thought it was a real *kiddush Hashem* [‘sanctification of God’s name’]; there’s a real need to help everybody,” she said. “Whenever there is a crisis, it’s beautiful to see how many are willing to go out and help.”

Los Angeles isn’t the only place where IsraAID is stepping up its efforts. It’s also helping with food-distribution programs in San Jose and the San Francisco Bay region, and in San Diego.

The organization is also looking to assist with the emotional impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, particularly in hard-hit areas of New York.

“There will be a high level of trauma that will need to be dealt with, and there is not enough talk about mental-health [issues] that people will endure,” said Davis. “It will take years to bounce back, so we are now assessing which partners to work with so we can do this over the next year.”

Business Profiles

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The Ernest H. Parsons Funeral Home, located at 71 Main St., Binghamton, has been a landmark since 1928 and is located in the J. Stewart Wells Mansion, built by renowned architect Isaac Perry, who completed construction in 1867.

Ernest H. Parsons owned and operated the funeral home from 1928 until his death in 1976. Charles Mills purchased the funeral home after Ernest’s death and continued the tradition until his retirement in 2012. The current owners – J. Fritsch, R. Fynboe, S. Pitkorchemny and K. Vakiener – strive to uphold the original motto of the founder: “Let Us Serve You with Understanding.” Parsons Funeral Home offers distinctive service with respectful attentiveness to the ceremonial rites and the utmost consideration of families’ desires to accord a last tribute of affection and esteem to their departed loved ones.

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Fax: 607-722-5626
Hours: Mon.-Fri., 8 am-5 pm

Garufi Law P.C. has served the Southern Tier for more than 29 years. Carman Garufi founded the practice in March 1991 with Sandra Garufy (currently of Counsel) with an emphasis on Matrimonial/Family Law. Since 2007, he has annually been selected one of the Best Lawyers® in America for Family Law. Garufi has been named a 2020 New York Upstate Super Lawyer®, and was honored as a 2019 Best Lawyers® Lawyer of the Year for Family Law in Binghamton. He is a past President of the Broome County Bar Association and recipient of its 2019 Community Service Award.

Alena Van Tull has been with the firm for 10 years, handling Family Law/Matrimonial matters, Elder Law including Wills and Estates, and Landlord/Tenant matters. Debra Cohn joined the firm this March, bringing 12 years of experience in Family Law/Matrimonial matters and practice management.

Banks Continued from page 6

3. Pay off small debts. Banks will examine your outstanding obligations. It’s important to present a strong balance sheet. Pay off as many small debts as possible so your business doesn’t appear overextended and your cash flow is maximized.

4. Go to the right bank. Different banks have different specialties. For instance, some banks work closely with the SBA to make money available for small businesses, including loans for commercial real estate, construction and equipment. Banks with an expertise in the type of loan you need can go the extra mile to get the deal done.

5. Address the issue of risk. There is no business without risk. If you are not prepared to discuss this issue, bankers will assume you haven’t thought about it. Lenders want to know you have planned for a variety of major risks.

Sooner or later, many small businesses need loans. To increase your chances of securing a loan, put yourself on the other side of the desk for a moment. If a business owner asked you for a loan, what would you want to know? If you start there and follow a few simple tips, you may soon find your small business doing big things.

Social Continued from page 1

Facebook at www.facebook.com/ReconstructingJudaism.

◆ A Wider Bridge, an organization that seeks to create equality in Israel by expanding LGBTQ inclusion in Israel, is holding webinars on a variety of topics. To RSVP for its programs and discussions, visit <https://awiderbridge.org/buildingbridges/>.

◆ The ASF Institute of Jewish Experience, which focuses on the classical Sephardic tradition, is offering a variety of online programming at <https://instituteofjewishexperience.org/index.php/upcoming-events>.

◆ Americans for Peace and Tolerance offers a 10-point program of “New Strategies for Jewish Leaders in a Time of Surging Jew-Hatred.” To learn about the program, visit <http://www.peaceandtolerance.org/ten/>.

For more resources, see the last seven issues of *The Reporter* or visit www.thereportergroup.org/Article.aspx?aID=5484, www.thereportergroup.org/Article.aspx?aID=5499, www.thereportergroup.org/Article.aspx?aID=5502, www.thereportergroup.org/Article.aspx?aID=5512, www.thereportergroup.org/Article.aspx?aID=5519, www.thereportergroup.org/Article.aspx?aID=5527 and <http://www.thereportergroup.org/Article.aspx?aID=5535>.

Ethical Continued from page 2

Similarly, the Talmud relates that in the city of Lod, the Roman emperor’s daughter was murdered and the Jewish community was blamed. The emperor threatened the Jews with mass execution unless they could produce the murderer. To save the Jewish people, two innocent brothers, Lilianus and Pappus, stepped forward and falsely confessed to the crime. Only they were executed by the Romans, sparing the rest of the Jewish community. Many rabbinic authorities have permitted voluntary self-sacrifice to rescue the broader community, based on Esther and the talmudic praise for these righteous brothers.

On the other hand, other rabbinic authorities argued that although saving the community is a very high value and some level of risk is acceptable to this end, these stories do not prove that one who is not currently in any danger may opt to risk his or her life for the sake of the community, since the brothers in Lod, and Esther, would have died along with their community anyway.

This brings us back to the “challenge study.” I believe that the lesson here is that it certainly would be permitted for a Jew to serve as a participant in a challenge study associated with rapidly developing a vaccine for coronavirus and, indeed, would be a very pious act. This even according to the stricter opinion, since the level of risk for those in such a study is relatively low – only young, healthy people would be accepted, and would receive careful medical oversight – and because everyone in the world is at risk for contracting the coronavirus; the participants were already at some risk just by living in society.

Participating in the study simply transfers the risk to a controlled setting, while at the same time potentially significantly benefitting all of society, and thus is a mitzvah.

The Jewish community should endorse such protocols, and if a Jew has the opportunity to enter such a study, he or she should enthusiastically do so.

Rabbi Jason Weiner is senior rabbi and director of spiritual care at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center.

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Major antisemitic incidents rose some 18 percent in 2019, according to new report

By JNS staff

(JNS) – The number of major antisemitic incidents worldwide rose by 18 percent in 2019 over the previous year, according to a newly released report from Tel Aviv University, the Kantor Center for the Study of European Jewry and the European Jewish Congress.

According to the report, 456 acts of “major violent cases” of antisemitism were reported worldwide, as compared to 387 in 2018. Seven Jews were killed in the attacks.

Those cases included:

- ◆ The shooting rampage at the Chabad of Poway in Southern California on April 27, the last day of Passover, in which one 60-year-old congregant, Lori Kaye, was murdered and three others, including senior Rabbi Yisroel Goldstein, were injured.

- ◆ The Yom Kippur shooting attack on a synagogue in Halle, Germany, on October 9.

- ◆ The December 10 shooting at a kosher grocery in Jersey City, NJ, in December, in which four people, including two Chasidic Jews, a store employee and a police officer, were killed; and,

- ◆ The machete attack on Hanukkah the home of rabbi in Monsey, NY, which injured multiple guests and led to the recent death of Yosef Neumann from injuries sustained in the attack.

The increase in attacks is a “sharp rise, especially in view of the considerable decline in such cases during the years 2015-2017,” the report stated. “At least 169 persons (37 percent of major violent cases) were physically attacked, mostly in public spaces... a relatively new phenomenon, already noted in 2018 in France.”

Additionally, more than 50 synagogues and some 30 community centers or Jewish schools across the globe were targeted for antisemitic attacks in 2019.

The report also pointed out that antisemitic expressions “continue to infiltrate from the fringes of society into the mainstream,” and that there is a “growing disparity” between what is happening on the ground and governmental efforts to stop antisemitism.

It singled out what it called “troubling trends.” In Germany, the report noted, police recorded some 1,839 antisemitic incidents in 2019, an average of five per day. While in the United States, “a new phenomenon is emerging, one of increased violent antisemitic manifestations, with shooting sprees and numerous casualties, inspired by right-wing ideologies as well as by certain groups within the Black Hebrew Israelites and the Nation of Islam.”

Though the report focused primarily on incidents in 2019, it did lay out concerns about antisemitic



Participants at the “No Hate. No Fear.” rally in New York City on January 5. (Photo by Rivka Segal)

incidents related to the coronavirus outbreak, as it is already seeing this play out among extreme-right activists, Islamists and the far-left. Canards online and elsewhere include the accusation that Jews are conspiring to undermine the world’s economic stability, have already created a vaccine, or developed the virus to attack Iranians and Muslims.

The report added that “besides these accusations, the

calls to attack Jews have acquired a new dimension. The FBI warned against calls coming from neo-Nazis and white supremacists to spread the contagion among Jews, by using quite ugly personal interactions. Moreover, cyber attacks on Jewish institutions and groups trying to congregate online are a novel trend resulting from the increasing use of different digital social platforms.”

However, the report did aim to put the impact of the coronavirus and the hate associated with it in “proportion.”

“Blaming Jews for ‘why things go wrong,’ as stated in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance 2016 Working Definition of antisemitism is a common practice as old as antisemitism, therefore, these manifestations do not represent a new development,” stated the report. It also noted that others including people of Asian descent are also being targeted by some groups.

In its conclusion, the report’s authors sum up their findings with questions: “Will 2020 continue the trend observed in 2019 of violence and abusive language against Jews, or that of growing awareness and finding solutions? Will the coronavirus crisis result in more accusations of the lowest kind against the Jewish people and its state, or will the understanding prevail that the fate of all mankind is intertwined, and that there is no way out of it but in cooperation and mutual support?”

Business Profiles

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With 53 years’ experience in sales, and celebrating over 24 years at *The Reporter*, Bonnie truly enjoys working with people to get the word out about their businesses, and helping them to create the look they want for their print ads. “Satisfaction guaranteed” is her mantra.

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Court Continued from page 5

“The Supreme Court is supported by a very liberal press that cheerleads it to rule in direct opposition to ‘Basic Law: Government,’ which says explicitly that you cannot rule out a prime minister who is indicted until he is convicted and after the last appeal has been heard,” said Taub.

He added that the press, which is “overwhelmingly liberal,” has been “instrumental in shaping a very strange narrative in which we are being told that the essence of democracy is the protection of human and civil rights by the courts, and the elections are just a procedure of democracy.”

Shmuel Sandler, a professor of religion and politics at Israel’s Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan and a senior research associate at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, told JNS that he agreed this is a precedent-setting case. “There are legitimate arguments since the unity deal sets a precedent,” he said.

Sandler pointed to a number of factors that make this situation complicated. First, he noted the tension between Israel’s right and left over how much power the judiciary should be allowed to have. Second, after three consecutive elections within the course of a year, there was the possibility of a fourth one, which added an additional level of urgency. Third, all of these deliberations in court are linked to a political struggle between left and right, not to mention Netanyahu’s own legal troubles. “Everything is interconnected,” said Sandler. “The Supreme Court is hesitant to create a precedent ruling because of all of the implications.”

According to Sandler, the current legal and political crisis taking place will be “a stepping stone for the study of the relationship between the judiciary and the government.”

Taub noted how Menachem Mautner, former dean of Tel Aviv University’s law faculty who identifies with Israel’s political left, wrote in his book, “Law and the Culture of Israel,” that since the left has largely been unable to win at the ballot since 1977, it has decided to entrench itself in the Supreme Court and increasingly hand it more powers.

The leftist approach, as he sees it, is to attack democracy “by moving political power from elected to appointed institutions – from the parliament to the court.”

Taub said that Israel needs “a strong Supreme Court,” and that if it overreaches its authority “it skews the balance of powers.”

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Day-to-day life during the COVID-19 pandemic Initiative brings artists into homes of those with disabilities during COVID-19 crisis

By JNS staff

(JNS) – In the new reality of self-isolation, certain populations like people with disabilities, children and youth-at-risk, who rely on interactive therapy for cognitive stimulation, are currently stuck at home with much less access.

In response, as part of its new TakeAction program and in partnership with website-building company Wix, the Jerusalem College of Technology's (Machon Lev) LevTech Entrepreneurship Center has launched Artists TakeAction – an online platform for virtual shows where musicians and other artists interact live with audiences of all types.

As part of the new initiative, artists donate their time to do live interactive shows like music, storytelling, magic, animal shows and more to engage children, people with disabilities and the general public stuck at home during the coronavirus crisis. Artists who are already set to do live shows through other platforms are also invited to publicize their events on the site, so that,



Nitzan Roitman performed for two shows for Shalva and Zichron Menachem. (Photo courtesy of Nitzan Roitman)

for example, a parent can see all the events listed in one place.

“Even weeks into this new reality of staying at home, we are all still working to adapt and create new ways to maintain good physical, emotional and mental well-being, especially for vulnerable populations,” said Orlee Guttman, JCT’s director of strategic partnerships and co-founder of LevTech. “With Artists Take Action, we created the platform to bring interactive stimulation

into the homes of those who need it. The response has been incredible thus far from parents, children and youth who rely on this type of interaction in their day-to-day lives.”

Artists TakeAction has partnered with organizations such as Shalva, which works with individuals with disabilities, Zichron Menachem, which helps children and families with cancer, and Kav L’Noar, which provides support and guidance for at-risk youth.

Events on the platform in the pilot week included concerts with musicians, such as Mishael Dee; Nitzan Roitman; Shim Craimer; Nachman Solomon; magician and mentalist Assaf Salomon; a live show with Eli Balams’ Animal Kingdom; and story time with acclaimed children’s author Debbie Herman.

Artists TakeAction is part of the larger TakeAction project, a program that leverages the talents of students, graduates and faculty to develop technological solutions for emerging needs in social-service and emergency relief due to COVID-19.

These software solutions and products will enable emergency services and non-profits to serve the people they normally help but with whom they now have limited contact, including the elderly, children with disabilities, the sick, people in need of food and medicine, and any population whose existing vulnerabilities are amplified during this era of self-isolation.

Apart from its new project, LevTech works throughout the year to apply the untapped potential of engineering and business students, in addition to JCT graduates from the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox communities, to create innovative solutions to identified challenges in the medical and social sectors. Many of JCT’s students, including the approximately 40 percent who come from the ultra-Orthodox community, have not previously been exposed to cutting-edge technologies. Through LevTech, they are now spearheading innovation for the benefit of vulnerable populations.

To encourage more artists to donate their time, visit ArtistsTakeAction.org.il.

How corona has disrupted the lives of young adults with disabilities, who thrive on routine

By Howard Blas

(JNS) – Max Wagenberg had enough of coronavirus. According to his mother, Helene Richter, the 21-year-old minimally verbal Manhattan resident with autism, searched for and found an “escape strategy” from the pandemic. “Last night, he came to me with this drawing of two birds and asked me to help him turn it into an

airplane, he went out to the side of the terrace and launched it – watching it soar through the buildings – as he smiled,” reports Helene. “So many people with special needs can’t put into words what is happening around them.”

With routines disrupted, programs suspended and caretakers unable to report for work, people with disabilities, their families

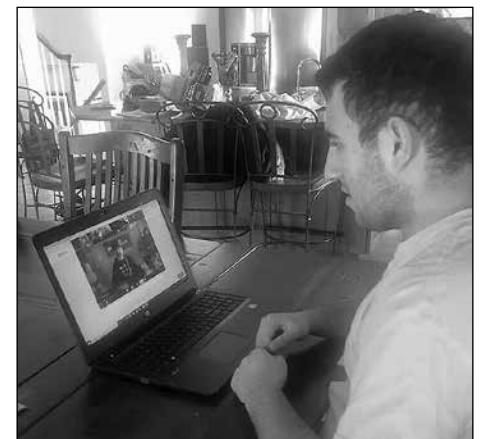
and professionals who work with them are experiencing new realities and experimenting with creative solutions.

“Max has been doing a lot of drawing and calendaring and reading social stories. This has helped a lot,” reports Helene.

Molly Jacobs, a 23-year-old New Jersey resident with developmental disabilities has been dealing with a day habilitation program out of session and suspended until further notice. “The hardest part for her has been the unknown. She wants to know when the quarantine will be over, when will her program start again, and what is going to happen with camp. I don’t have the answers that she needs to feel secure and less scared,” notes her mother, Hannah Jacobs.

To help get through this difficult period, Hannah and Molly have developed new routines, taken advantage of technology and participated in special off-season summer-camp activities. “We focus on activities that we write on a daily schedule to give her goals to look forward to each day. The Zoom calls with her friends from both camp and her program have centered her,” said Hannah.

Molly is a longtime participant in the Tikvah overnight summer camping program at Camp Ramah in New England. “She loves the Havdalah services [for ending the Jewish Sabbath], which she wears pajamas to because ‘that’s what we do at camp.’ These are scary times for everyone, and for Molly, our focus is letting her know that it’s OK to be scared, and we are here to keep her safe.”



Friendship Circle participant Matthew Goldstein took part in a Sunday morning program online from Friendship Circle in Livingston, NJ. (Photo courtesy of the Friendship Circle)

When 28-year-old Sammy Leibenstein’s day program was suspended, he left his group home in Santa Clara, CA, and returned to his family’s home in Santa Cruz 45 minutes away. “He’s definitely enjoying the TV time,” reports his younger sister, Ruby Hartman. “But it’s getting tough to also get him motivated, active and engaged in more thoughtful activities.” Ruby reached out on Facebook to many of her old Jewish summer camp friends who also knew Sammy from camp. She asked them to consider setting up a time to reach out to Sammy and was pleased with the outpouring of support and willingness to help.

Gabrielle Kaplan-Mayer, director of Jewish Learning Venture’s “Whole Community Inclusion” in Philadelphia, observes, “The coronavirus quarantine has impacted Jews with disabilities in a number of different difficult ways. First, many people with disabilities have coexisting medical conditions, which put them at high risk for the virus. People living in group homes, residential schools or community residences aren’t able to see their family and friends. Many school-age children and teens have lost access to special education and school-based therapies, and parents are struggling to home school as best they’re able. It’s an incredibly hard time.”

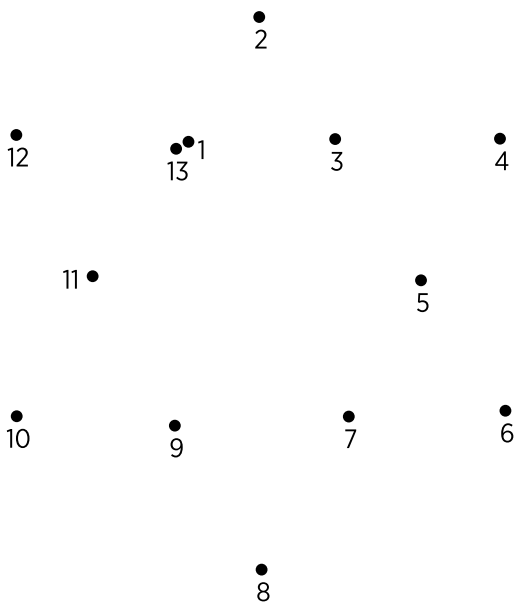
Stacey Spencer, the Inclusion Program Manager at Jewish Family and Children’s Service of Minneapolis, reports, “I am still working on creating a sense of community with our Caring Connections participants, who are Jewish adults with disabilities.”

Spencer is finding creative ways to create community when in-person events and See “Routine” on page 11



Max Wagenberg launched his paper airplane off his New York City terrace. (Photo courtesy of the Wagenberg family)

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Jewish women’s network regroups online to boost their outlooks and businesses

By Eliana Rudee

(JNS) – When Helena Baker launched the Jewish Women’s Global Network last October, she had no idea how her networking-based program would transform in the wake of the imminent coronavirus. And she certainly had no idea how the inspirational, business-focused approach would hit home for those left at home, many recently unemployed.

Baker, 27, started the network a year after making *aliyah* from England, hoping that a networking group for women might aid her own efforts to find work as a freelance writer. Reaching out to Jewish, female influencers and CEOs in Israel, she brought what she calls some “pretty big names” to Tel Aviv every two weeks to share their passions and best practices in business for an audience of between 10 and 15 Jewish women.

Though this audience may be particularly good at networking, Baker told JNS, as “Jewish people in general are networkers, always gathering for Shabbat and holiday meals, gathering in *shul* and constantly networking and socializing,” with physical meetings no longer relevant during the coronavirus outbreak, a new method was necessary.

Now, as the program has gone online, with both live and recorded videos, Baker maintained that “inspiration is important at this time. Everyone needs a reminder that it’s hard, and we should be open and honest, and after the fact, use [the dialogue] to grow and be stronger.”

One perk of having the sessions online, Baker said, is that the audience can grow, with women so far joining in from England, Germany and the United States, in addition to those in Israel.

Topics and speakers range from Milkstrip CEO Avital Beck, who is teaching “seven tools to help you open a successful startup and enjoy it” to Sarah Encaoua-Guige (The Hassidic HipsterGirl), who taught “how to bring spirituality into your business life” by working learning into a busy schedule.

Encaoua-Guige, who said she hoped to “get the word of God out” and “encourage people to find their own paths,” told JNS that she was “deeply impressed” with the diversity of the audience.

The lectures, Baker told JNS, offer teachable messages. Each of the women, including Beck, a mother of six whose Israel-based company uses big data derived from breast milk, shows that “it is hard work to build a business, but it is possible to succeed despite the odds, with busy lives outside of professional lives.”

Jamie Geller, originally from the Philadelphia area, said her Jewishness is the “core principle” upon which her digital food-media company is based. During the coronavirus, she has learned that “it’s OK to pull back the covers and show what’s happening behind the scenes.” She plans to explore the idea “of being an authentic, real, honest, open and vulnerable CEO” in her May 20 lecture.

Though the effects of coronavirus on her partner companies have “closed or narrowed the field for us,” Geller’s company has seen a rise of engagement of about 10 percent to 15 percent with more people at home turning to cooking and food not just as comfort, but also a family and relationship-building activity that Geller believes will last longer than the virus itself.

“People are having more family meals, learning new skills and recipes, and sharing more house-hold responsibilities – one of the positives of this terrible pandemic,” she said.

This message, though brought on by an epidemic, describes her vision and aim for the Jewish world at large, to “inspire more people to celebrate with their families – not just the holidays and not just on Shabbat, but even on a regular basis, to learn the value of what it means to come around the table through food.”

The speakers’ messages, as well as the group camaraderie, have already helped many.

Since becoming redundant at her product-management job for a genomics big-data startup, Yael Maoz opened her own consulting business in Israel, helping “biotech and agritech companies handle the challenges of a post-COVID-19 market – whether it be with management or technology,” she told JNS. “I love analyzing and solving complex problems, and with so many businesses needing



Jamie Geller said her Jewishness is the “core principle” upon which her digital food-media company is based. (Photo by Miguel Emmanuelli Photography)

to downsize, it’s critical that they plan strategically for how they manage with smaller teams, identify and meet their critical goals, and analyze the potential of new technology.”

Maoz has attended the women’s lectures to find an accountability buddy to help build her business. “So far, the content has been great, and I’ve already connected with another budding entrepreneur also looking for accountability and support,” she told JNS. “I’m meeting women from a range of fields, learning tons about business and marketing, and doing it all while properly social distancing. I feel like post-COVID-19 will be a time of tremendous business growth for the women in this network.”

Aliyah continues with 18 Americans in age of corona

By JNS staff

(JNS)—Eighteen new immigrants to Israel landed at Ben-Gurion International Airport on May 5 as part of a Nefesh B’Nefesh group aliyah flight, arriving amid increased interest in *aliyah* among North American Jews.

The new arrivals, ranging in ages from a year-old baby to a 66-year-old, hail from New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Florida and Illinois, and will be living in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Beit Shemesh, Ramat Gan and Jaffa. The new *olim* will go directly into quarantine for 14 days, as mandated by the Israeli government.

“Ever since my wife and I first visited Israel over 30 years ago, we have been dreaming of the day when we could come home permanently,” said Ken Goldblatt from Cleveland. “After many visits and years of instilling a love of Israel in our children, we are excited to be joining our daughter in Israel, where she will soon be getting married, and look forward to welcoming our son and his family in the next two months. While it is difficult to leave family and friends in America, we hope to travel back often to visit.”

A total of 455 new *aliyah* applications were submitted to Nefesh B’Nefesh (in comparison to 302 in April 2019) throughout April, with



A young arrival with a soldier from the IDF HomeFront Command, who was helping the North Americans with their entry to Israel on May 5. (Photo by Yonit Schiller)

642 individuals downloading applications (in comparison to 417 in April 2019). May is already showing a similar pattern.

“We are committed to finding solutions for all those who want to make aliyah amid the COVID-19 crisis,” said Rabbi Yehoshua Fass, co-founder and executive director of Nefesh B’Nefesh. “Over the last 18 years, we have provided solutions through challenging times and circumstances.”

The flight was also sponsored by with the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration, the Jewish Agency, Keren Kayemeth Lelsrael and Jewish National Fund-USA.

Quick Reference Guide to Planned Giving

Use this planned giving quick reference guide to help determine the best strategy for achieving your philanthropic and financial goals.

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Weekly Parasha

Behar-Bechukotai, Leviticus 25:1-27:34

What's truly radical

RABBI DANIEL SWARTZ, SPIRITUAL LEADER OF TEMPLE HESED; EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE COALITION ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND JEWISH LIFE

Behar-Bechukotai contains an idea that has often been portrayed as radical. However, it is the reasoning behind it that is so radical that it can still be transformative today, thousands of years after it was first written. What's more, this radical reasoning could serve us well today were we to follow it as our society begins to reopen from social distancing.

The idea is the Sabbatical (*shmitah*) and Jubilee (*yovel*) system, outlined in Leviticus 25:1-22 (with related texts in Exodus 23 and Deuteronomy 15). Every seven years the land is to be given a rest. Concomitantly, according to Deuteronomy, debts are to be forgiven and slaves freed.

After counting off seven sets of seven years, in the 50th year, release (*d'ror*) is to be proclaimed to all the inhabitants of the land. (This phrase, by the way, with "liberty" used as the translation for *d'ror*, is what is embossed on the Liberty Bell.) All land is to be redistributed, so that no one owns too much and no one is landless.

These ideas have sometimes been portrayed as radical, both by their supporters and their detractors. Their supporters include the American economist and philosopher Henry George, particularly in his landmark work "Progress and Poverty." George was a major inspiration for global progressive and social movements and leaders, ranging

from Theodore Roosevelt to Franklin Delano Roosevelt to early socialists. George put these ideas at the center of his progressive agenda, contributing to a wide variety of social changes in dozens of countries, including such well-accepted policies as social security and the use of the secret ballot in voting.

Detractors range from the railroad barons of George's day to "supply side" economists today. Almost uniformly, they declare the Levitical declarations to be utterly impractical, the idle dreams of prophets who had no idea how to actually run a nation or economy. Ironically, many of the

See "Radical" on page 11

Congregational Notes

Temple Israel

Orientation: Conservative
Rabbi: Geoffrey Brown
Address: 4737 Deerfield Pl., Vestal, NY 13850
Phone: 723-7461 and 231-3746
Office hours: Mon.-Thurs., 8:30 am-3:30 pm; Fri., 8 am-3 pm
E-mail: titammy@stny.twc.com
Website: www.templeisraelvestal.org
Service Schedule: Tuesday, 5:30 pm; Friday, 5:30 pm; Saturday, 9:30 am

On Fridays and Tuesdays at 5:30 pm, services will be led by Rabbi Geoffrey Brown via Zoom. The Torah portion for May 16 is Leviticus 25:1-27:34 and the haftarah is Jeremiah 16:19-17:14.

On Saturday, May 16, Havdalah services will be held at 9:15 pm and led by Rabbi Geoffrey Brown via Zoom.

On Sunday, May 17, Torah study will be held at noon and led by Rabbi Geoffrey Brown via Zoom.

Temple office hours for Tuesday-Thursday, May 19-21, will be 2-4 pm. The office will be closed Friday, May 22; Monday, May 25; and Friday, May 29.

Temple Israel is collecting for CHOW during regular business hours. The bin is between the two sets of glass doors at the entrance. Buzz to come in the first set of doors to access the bin.

Beth David Synagogue

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Rabbi: Zev Silber
Address: 39 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905
Phone: 722-1793, Rabbi's Office: 722-7514
Fax: 722-7121
Office hours: Mon. closed; Tues. 10 am-1 pm; Wed. closed; Thurs. 9 am-1 pm; Fri. 10 am-1 pm
Beth David e-mail address: bethdavid@stny.rr.com
Rabbi's e-mail: rabbisilber@stny.rr.com
Website: www.bethdavid.org
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Rohr Chabad Center

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Rabbi Aaron and Rivkah Slonim, Directors
E-mail: aslonim@binghamton.edu, rslonim@chabadofbinghamton.com
Address: 420 Murray Hill Rd., Vestal, NY 13850
Phone: 797-0015, Fax: 797-0095
Website: www.Chabadofbinghamton.com
Rabbi Zalman and Rochel Chein, Education
E-mail: zchein@Jewishbu.com, rchein@Jewishbu.com
Rabbi Levi and Hadasa Slonim, Downtown and Development
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Rabbi Yisroel and Goldie Ohana, Programming
E-mail: yohana@Jewishbu.com, gohana@Jewishbu.com
Regular service times: Daily 7:30 am, Friday evening 6 pm, Shabbat morning 9:30 am, Maariv and Havdalah one hour after candle-lighting time, Sundays 9:30 am.
To join the mailing list, for up-to-date information on adult education offerings or to arrange for a private tutorial, for details concerning the Judaica shop and resource center, or for assistance through the Piaker Free Loan Society or Raff Maasim Tovim Foundation, call Chabad's office at 797-0015.

Chabad will be holding pre-Shabbat virtual programs. For more information, visit www.JewishBU.com/S2020Partnership.

Congregation Tikun v'Or

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
Address: PO Box 3981, Ithaca, NY 14852; 2550 Triphammer Rd. (corner of Triphammer and Burdick Hill), Lansing, NY
Phone: 607-256-1471
Website: www.tikkunvor.org
E-mail: info@tikkunvor.org
Presidents: Lauren Korfine and Shira Reisman
Rabbi: Brian Walt
Religious School Director/Admin. Coordinator: Naomi Wilensky
Services: Fridays at 7:30 pm unless otherwise noted. Intergenerational Shabbat, music services, and other special services. Call for the weekly schedule.
Religious School: Preschool through seventh-grade classes meet on Sunday mornings.
Sixth-grade Hebrew and seventh-grade b'nai mitzvah classes meet on Wednesday afternoons.
Adult Ed: Mini courses throughout the year. Adult Hebrew offered regularly. Call the office for details.

Synagogues limit face-to-face gatherings

Area synagogues have announced that they are limiting face-to-face gatherings. That means there will be no services or programming held until further notice. Some meetings, services and classes will be available online or by phone. For specific information regarding services (including online services), meetings and classes at any of the area synagogues, contact them by phone or e-mail.

Temple Beth El of Oneonta

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
Rabbi-Cantor: George Hirschfeld
Address: 83 Chestnut St., Oneonta, NY 13820
Mailing address: P.O. Box 383, Oneonta, NY 13820
Phone: 607-432-5522
Website: www.templebetheloneonta.org
E-mail: TBEOneonta@gmail.com
Regular service times: visit the temple website for days of services and times
Religious School/Education: Religious School, for grades kindergarten through bar/bat mitzvah, meets Sunday mornings. For the schedule of services, classes and events, see the website.

Temple Beth-El of Ithaca

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
Rabbi: Miriam T. Spitzer
Rabbi Emeritus: Scott L. Glass
Address: 402 North Tioga St. (the corner of Court and Tioga streets), Ithaca, NY 14850-4292
Phone: 273-5775
E-mail: rabbi@tbeithaca.org and secretary@tbeithaca.org
Website: www.tbeithaca.org
President: Randy Ehrenberg
Sisterhood President: Julie Paige
Director of Education: Rabbi Suzanne Brody
Administrative Assistant: Jane Griffith
Services: Friday 8 pm; Saturday 10 am, unless otherwise announced. Weekday morning minyan 7:30 am (9 am on Sundays and legal holidays).
Religious School/Education: September-May: Classes meet on Sunday, 9 am-12:30 pm and Wednesday afternoons, 3:45-5:45 pm. The Midrashah (eighth grade and high school) classes will meet at times designated by their respective teachers.
Adult Ed.: Numerous weekly courses, several semester-long courses and a variety of mini-courses and lectures are offered throughout the year. Call the temple office for more details.

Kol Haverim

Affiliation: Society for Humanistic Judaism
Address: P.O. Box 4972, Ithaca, NY 14852-4972
Phone: 607-277-3345
E-mail: info@kolhaverim.net
Website: www.kolhaverim.net
Chairwoman: Abby Cohn
Kol Haverim: The Finger Lakes Community for Humanistic Judaism, is an Ithaca-based organization that brings people together to explore and celebrate Jewish identity, history, culture and ethics within a secular, humanistic framework. KH is part of an international movement for Secular Humanistic Judaism and is affiliated with the Society for Humanistic Judaism, a national association with over 30 member communities and congregations around the country. Established in the spring of 1999, it offers celebrations of Jewish holidays, monthly Shabbat pot-lucks, adult education, a twice-monthly Cultural School for children, and a bar and bat mitzvah program.
KH welcomes all individuals and families, including those from mixed religious backgrounds, who wish to strengthen the Jewish experience in their lives and provide their children with a Jewish identity and experience.

Friday, May 15, light candles before..... 8 pm
Saturday, May 16, Shabbat ends 9:01 pm
Friday, May 22, light candles before..... 8:07 pm
Saturday, May 23, Shabbat ends 9:08 pm

Temple Concord

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
Rabbi: Barbara Goldman-Wartell
Address: 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905
Office hours: Tues.-Fri., 10 am-2 pm
Phone: 723-7355, Fax: 723-0785
Office e-mail: TempleConcordbinghamton@gmail.com
Website: www.templeconcord.com
Regular service times: Friday, 8 pm; Saturday, 10:35 am, when religious school is in session.
Hebrew school: Hebrew school meets at 4:15 pm and 5:15 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the school year unless otherwise noted.

All services and programs are online only. Friday night Shabbat Services will start at 7 pm for the month of May.

Friday, May 15: Shabbat services at 7 pm at <https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/350204323>, by calling 1-929-205-6099 and entering meeting ID # 350 204 323, or by visiting www.facebook.com/templeconcord.

Saturday, May 16: Torah study at 9:15 am at <https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/342411102> or by calling 1-929-205-6099 and entering meeting ID # 342 411 102.

Saturday, May 16: "Havdalah with a Bonus" at 7 pm at <https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/526246866>, by calling 1-929-205-6099 and entering meeting ID 526 246 866, or by visiting <https://www.facebook.com/templeconcord/>.

Sunday, May 17: "Jewish Bioethics During a Pandemic" adult education learning program with Dr. Carol and Rabbi Gary Gerson on Zoom at 10:30 am. Send an e-mail to Templeconcordbinghamton@gmail.com to register for the program.

Friday, May 22: Shabbat services at 7 pm at <https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/350204323>, by calling 1-929-205-6099 and entering meeting ID # 350 204 323, or by visiting www.facebook.com/templeconcord.

Saturday, May 23: No Torah study. Shabbat morning services at 10:30 am celebrating Charlotte Coker becoming a bat mitzvah at <https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/91657233743> or by calling 1-929-205-6099 and entering meeting ID 916 5723 3743 and Password 020099.

Saturday, May 23: "Havdalah with a Bonus" at 7 pm at <https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/526246866>, by calling 1-929-205-6099 and entering meeting ID 526 246 866, or by visiting <https://www.facebook.com/templeconcord/>.

Temple Brith Sholom

Affiliation: Unaffiliated
Address: P.O. Box 572, 117 Madison St., Cortland, NY 13045
Phone: 607-756-7181
President: Bruce Fein, 607-423-3346
Service leaders: Lay leadership
Shabbat services: Either Friday evening at 7:30 pm or Saturday at 10 am from Rosh Hashanah to Shavuot. Holiday services are also held. Check the weekly e-mail for upcoming services. Contact the president to get on the e-mail list.
Religious School: Students are educated on an individual basis. Temple Brith Sholom is a small equalitarian congregation serving the greater Cortland community. Congregants span the gamut of observance and services are largely dependent on the service leader. The Friday night siddur is "Likrat Shabbat," while the Saturday morning siddur is "Gates of Prayer." The community extends a warm welcome to the Jewish student population of SUNY Cortland, as well as the residents of local adult residences.

Penn-York Jewish Community

President-Treasurer-Secretary: Harvey Chernosky, 570-265-3869
B'nai B'rith: William H. Seigel Lodge
Purpose: To promote Jewish identity through religious, cultural, educational and social activities in the Southern Tier of New York and the Northern Tier of Pennsylvania, including Waverly, NY; Sayre, Athens and Towanda, PA, and surrounding communities.

Norwich Jewish Center

Orientation: Inclusive
Rabbi: David Regenspan
Address: 72 South Broad St., Norwich, NY 13815
Contact: Guilia Greenberg, 336-1523
Purpose: To maintain a Jewish identity and meet the needs of the Jewish community in the area.
Adult Ed.: Saturday morning study is held at 10 am. Call for more information and to confirm.

Networking, navigation app to support MS patients and health-care professionals

By JNS staff

(JNS) – Belong.Life, a developer of social networks for managing and navigating treatments and the creator of the world’s largest social network for cancer patients, announced the launch of its new free and anonymous AI-powered social-networking and navigation platform for multiple sclerosis patients, caregivers and health-care professionals: BelongMS.

The app, which can be downloaded for Android and iOS, follows the success of Belong’s global social-networking and navigation app for cancer management, the largest platform of its kind.

BelongMS utilizes proprietary machine-learning algorithms and domain expertise to provide hyper-personalized information to support patients, including support groups and direct access to medical professionals such as neurologists, radiologists, urologists and others who can answer patient questions.

The app also provides tools like a medical-binder manager to store and organize medical records in one place with the option to share them securely and privately with family members or physicians. A clinical matching trial feature is also available, utilizing Natural Language Processing algorithms to analyze all available

trials around the globe to match patients within two weeks on average.

“We are leveraging our market-proven experience in patient engagement, backed by disruptive technology, to provide effective support for patients across the health-care continuum,” said Belong.Life co-founder and CEO Eliran Malki. “People who receive challenging diagnoses need to make critical decisions and have access to the relevant data and support they need.”

BelongMS was initially launched in Israel, with one in four local MS patients now engaging with the app, which will now be available globally.

Routine.....Continued from page 8

in-person home visits are no longer possible. “I have made numerous check-in phone calls and virtual ‘home visits’ to our Caring Connections members and their families to provide them with support and to be able to assess their current needs. I set up a closed Facebook Group and invited our Caring Connections members, their families and staff to all join us,” she relates. “Our members were unhappy to hear that our annual Passover ‘Sing-along Seder’ scheduled for April was canceled. This was yet another disappointment and change they experienced while trying to adjust being quarantined at home.”

But she adds that “our seder leader was still able to perform our lively and interactive sing-along live for everyone to partake in. It was a wonderful and heartwarming event. They are modifying their lives to this ‘new normal’ much like the rest of us are trying to do.”

Shelly Christensen, also of Minneapolis, a disabilities inclusion professional who worked on the Ruderman Chabad Inclusion Initiative and wrote “From Longing to Belonging-A Practical Guide to Including People With Disabilities and Mental Health Conditions in Your Faith Community.” She echoes Spencer’s observation that people with disabilities are adapting to some of the same challenges the rest of society is dealing with. “All of us are adapting how we structure social connections. People with disabilities are just like anyone else,” she said.

While Christensen notes that many people are staying connected with friends, family and co-workers through Zoom and social media, and that there are groups on Facebook specifically to connect people with disabilities,

Radical.....Continued from page 10

provisions of Leviticus 25 have stronger archaeological evidence than almost any other biblical laws, including parallel traditions throughout the ancient Middle East, as documented by Michael Hudson in “The Lost Tradition of Biblical Debt Cancellations.” Indeed, to the ancient world, such ideas were not in and of themselves radical. They just made sense to anyone trying to design a just society.

What was radical was the reason given in 25:23: “The land is Mine; you are but strangers resident with me.” Remember, the “land” in question was the “promised land,” the land the Torah describes again and again as first promised from the very beginnings of our people, the land that serves as the destination for the people at the end of their long desert wanderings. If ever one could imagine a land that would be “owned,” surely it would be this long- and oft-promised land! But no, this land – and, the implication clearly is, all other land as well – belongs to God, not humans. Now, that was, and is, radical! (By the way, George realized that this was the reason behind the debt cancellation/land redistribution biblical laws, and they were his motivation as well, but his followers emphasized the policies and generally forgot about the reason behind them!)

What a different world we would be living in if people had in general followed the notion that God is the ultimate owner, that “private property” is in reality a trust that we hold for God to benefit the world itself, other people and future generations. Instead of putting the economy first, we’d put the health of people first. Instead of seeking out short-term profit, we’d think on God’s timescale and build a sustainable society. We’d prioritize economic stimuli that shifted us from fossil fuels to clean, safe forms of energy. Because the land isn’t ours: it belongs to God.



Friendship Circle New Jersey Executive Director Toba Grossbaum gave a virtual cooking class for Friendship Circle families. Helping her with the program were three of her children, Gittel, Liba and Yudi. (Photo courtesy of the Friendship Circle)

she worries about people with disabilities who don’t have access to smartphones, tablets and computers, or who don’t know how to use such technology. She says “they are prone to isolation.”

She also worries about the potential loss of direct-support professionals if the professional or individual they are caring for is exposed to the coronavirus.

Rabbi Bentzion and Rochel Groner, co-directors of Friendship Circle, affiliated with the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, and ZABS Place (a Friendship Circle-run resale store) in Charlotte, NC, are also finding ways to help those they work with tackle boredom and loneliness.

The rabbi reports, “We’ve taken all our Friendship Circle programs online and increased the number of virtual activities. And we’ve tried implementing one-on-one home-based skill-building activities for our coaches to do with our ZABS young adults. It’s been a little more challenging, but at least they get to see familiar faces.”

They add that “for the most part, the biggest challenge we’re hearing from everyone is figuring how to stay engaged in a routine despite being in quarantine.”

The Groners, like Christensen, are finding that technology is sometimes difficult to use and can be unpredictable, which tends to complicate matters even more. Another challenge, they note, is how to manage the technology, which is sometimes delayed or has a learning curve for some of their constituents. They also point out that some young adults are much more isolated in terms of access and can’t participate in online activities.

While people with and without disabilities are primarily focusing on present-day realities, most are also imagining what a post-corona future will look like in

terms of both social interaction and employment. People with disabilities have been “severely impacted” by loss of jobs and are likely to experience the impact of unemployment even when the economy is more fully up and running. At ZABS Place, the Groners anticipate that many skills will need to be retaught. “We’re not sure how our young adults will feel about having to ‘take a few steps back.’ That will also impact how quickly we can get up to speed as a store.”

Steve Keisman, senior vice president at the online site Identifor, and an independent transition and neurodiversity employment specialist, is concerned. “After nearly a decade of gradual attention and limited but increasing opportunity for people with neurodifferences in the workplace, that train hit a brick wall without warning in March of this year.”

He asks, “What will the ‘new normal’ look like for our community, especially the more impacted and those who are not STEM-oriented or savant? What’s the future for the estimated 50,000 to 70,000 individuals with autism alone who turn 21 every year and no longer qualify for school-sponsored and funded services?”

Keisman points out that hospitality, retail, food service and other areas of long-established employment for the neurodiverse will be slow to recover and will likely return in a very different way. Employment in hospitals, schools, restaurants, gyms and health clubs will also be reconsidered because of health concerns and risks. He recommends that concerned family members of people with disabilities continue to determine the specific skills, abilities and interests of the family member, and to explore various employment possibilities that might be a good fit when the economy unfreezes. (He also recommends online career-assessment tools like the free, game-based Identifor.)

Those in the disabilities field, along with their families, hope and pray that Max, Molly, Sammy and the tens of thousands of other Americans with certain challenges will soon return to their social, religious and vocational routines – and to the day when Max will longer need to draw pictures of birds in search of freedom.

**Missed an issue of *The Reporter*?
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The Reporter's website, www.thereporter-group.org, offers access to full issues in PDF format. You can find them in the “Current & Past Issues” section, accessible from the main menu bar at the top left of the page, dating back to the April 22, 2016, issue. The site also highlights several articles from each weekly issue of *The Reporter* dating back to September 2007 – those can be found under “Publications – The Reporter” at the bottom of the menu bar.

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Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Report: France wants tough response if Israel goes ahead with annexation

France is pushing members of the European Union to consider threatening Israel with tough consequences if it goes ahead with its plan to annex parts of Judea and Samaria. Belgium, Ireland and Luxembourg want to discuss the option of economic actions against Israel in a foreign ministers' meeting on May 15, three E.U. diplomats told Reuters in a report published on May 11. However, it's far from clear that there will be an agreement from all E.U. members for this move, and Israeli allies such as Hungary and the Czech Republic could block it. It is also unknown what punitive measures would be proposed. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that governmental talks on extending Israeli sovereignty to Jewish settlements and the Jordan Valley would begin in July. An E.U. spokesman on May 11 was quoted in the report as saying "annexation is contrary to international law and if annexation goes ahead, the E.U. will act accordingly." "There is clearly a need to look at what annexation means in the context of international law, and we do need to know our options," said one senior E.U. diplomat involved in discussions. "We also need to say what exactly the consequences of annexation would be, ideally as a way to stop any such move."

Gilad Erdan appointed as next Israeli ambassador to both U.S., U.N.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced on May 11 that he is appointing Minister of Public Security, Strategic Affairs and Minister of Information Gilad Erdan as both the Israeli ambassador to the United States and United Nations. "I am proud and excited for the privilege of being able to fight on behalf of the righteousness of our path in the international arena, and to defend Israel in light of the challenges ahead," Erdan said in a statement. Erdan has served as a Likud Knesset member since first being elected in 2003; prior to that, he was an adviser to Netanyahu and former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. The longtime Likud lawmaker has served in a variety of ministerial roles over the past decade-and-a-half. While

strategic affairs minister, Erdan carved out a "high-profile" role in combating the BDS movement. Most notably, his ministry was behind a two-year campaign aimed at exposing connections between anti-Israel BDS groups and terrorist organizations. Erdan was rumored to be offered the U.N. post last August, but turned it down. Reports have circulated for some time that Danny Danon would be stepping down as U.N. ambassador. He was first appointed in 2015 for a three-year term and was extended multiple times. Like Danon, Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Ron Dermer has also been reported to be stepping down from his post. However, his tenure was also extended due to Israel's political deadlock. Dermer has served as Israel's envoy to the United States since 2013. According to *Haaretz*, Dermer will likely step down as ambassador only after the U.S. presidential election in November. Erdan will continue to serve as a minister in the government until his official appointment as ambassador and take up the U.N. post once the new government approves his nomination. Israel was set to swear-in its new government on May 14.

Poll: Most Jewish Israelis support annexation

A majority of Jewish Israelis (52 percent) support Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's plan to apply sovereignty in Judea and Samaria, according to a poll published on May 10. However, only 32 percent of Jewish Israelis actually think the government will actually annex any territory, according to the Israeli Voice Index for April carried out by the Israel Democracy Institute. Among Jews, 71 percent of those on the right support annexation of parts of Judea and Samaria, while in the center the figure is 31 percent and on the left only 8 percent. On security issues, the most optimistic were Jews on the right (82 percent), followed by the center (69 percent) and the left (53 percent). As to what rights the Palestinians living in the annexed areas should have, most Jews (37 percent) said they should not be changed while among Arabs, the most common opinion (47 percent) was that these Arabs should be given citizenship. With regard to national security issues, optimism among Jews was at 75 percent, while among Arabs it stood at only 43 percent. The survey

was conducted by the Guttman Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research at the Israel Democracy Institute online and by telephone from April 30 to May 3. Of the 769 respondents, 615 were interviewed in Hebrew and 154 in Arabic.

Government to bail out El Al

The Israeli government plans to bail out national airline carrier El Al, granting loan guarantees for 80 percent of a \$400 million loan. It was agreed on May 10 at a meeting at the Finance Ministry that the loan would be dependent on a range of demands, the Israeli business daily *Globes* reported. El Al airlines has suffered since the onset of the coronavirus outbreak and the cancellation of passenger flights. The government is requiring the airline to make cuts beyond those already presented, including the firing of 2,000 employees, or around 33 percent of its workforce. These will save about \$50 million and include cutbacks on employee benefits of free flights for themselves and their families, salary cuts for senior executives and the Board of Directors, and the temporary stoppage of granting dividends to shareholders, according to the report. It is also expected that the airline owners invest NIS 100 million (\$28.4 million) into the airline or to dilute their stake. According to the report, El Al has paid around NIS 200 million (\$56.9 million) in dividends over the past five years. The Finance Ministry does not want to gain shares in the airline in exchange for the loan.

Antisemites disrupt forum attended by Jewish candidate for VT lt. governor

An online forum for Democratic candidates for Vermont lieutenant governor, which included a Jewish candidate, was interrupted twice in recent weeks by antisemites who drew swastikas and wrote "hail Satan." Such activity is known as "Zoom bombing," according to the ADL. "I am in the middle of the hardest forum of my life. We have been zoom bombed twice with Nazi symbols. I am the Jewish candidate in this race. I am shaken," tweeted Brenda Siegel on April 29. In a statement, Siegel said that "as a Jewish woman and public figure in Vermont, I have experienced a growing number of antisemitic attacks since the election of [U.S. President] Donald Trump. Long simmering beneath the surface, there is a rise of hate in this state." The forum, which was hosted by a local Democratic committee and was publicized, consisted of, in both instances, one of the intruders drawing a swastika.

Coronavirus has taken lives of at least 1,300 French Jews

Between 1,300 and 2,000 French Jews have succumbed to the coronavirus, according to the country's Jewish burial service. Hundreds have been flown to be laid to rest in Israel, according to a report from the *Makor Rishon* daily on May 8. As of May 8, Jews make up about 5 percent of the 25,987 reported fatalities in France as a result of complications due to COVID-19. The figures demonstrate the French Jewish community being the most hard-hit in Europe to date. France has about half a million Jews.

Couple arrested in NYC for accusing Chasidim of spreading coronavirus

A couple has been arrested for allegedly shouting at three Chasidic men in Brooklyn, NY, blaming Jews for spreading the coronavirus, all while attempting to rip off their face coverings, announced the New York Police Department. Paulo and Clelia Pinho, 35, and 46, respectively, were charged with hate crimes for the incident in the Chasidic neighborhood of Williamsburg on May 10, said police, which also mentioned that Paulo Pinho allegedly called police to report a large crowd gathering. The two exited their vehicle and "accosted the men, shouting out slurs and attempted to take away their face coverings," reported ABC News, citing the NYPD. "You're the reason why we're getting sick," one of the suspects allegedly shouted, according to police. The couple added that "the mayor says you Jews are the reason we're getting sick." The two were detained by the Shomrim, a volunteer watch group, until NYPD officers arrived and arrested them. New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio denounced the incident, even though he recently lambasted a sizable gathering at a Jewish funeral for a rabbi in Williamsburg.

Israeli researchers make breakthrough in developing corona vaccine

Researchers at the Israel Institute for Biological Research have successfully isolated a key coronavirus antibody, which is a "significant step" toward developing a vaccine for the virus, Israeli Defense Minister Naftali Bennett announced on May 4. Bennett visited the institute on May 4, where he was briefed on "a significant breakthrough in finding an antidote for the coronavirus." The antibody "monoclonal," which means it is derived from a single cell taken from the blood of a patient who recovered from COVID-19, can neutralize the disease-causing coronavirus inside carriers' bodies, explained Bennett. Antibodies from those who have successfully overcome the coronavirus are widely considered key to developing a possible cure for the virus. Institute Director Shmuel Shapira said the antibody formula was being patented; afterward, an international manufacturer will be sought to mass produce it. Another Israeli research team at Mig Vax, an affiliate of MIGAL Galilee Research Institute, is reportedly close to completing its first phase of developing a COVID-19 vaccine and recently received an injection of \$12 million to accelerate research.

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